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Bear necessities
The business of bears on page 3

Stories of Scotty
Remembering Scotty Morrison on page 4

Spring in your step
How to celebrate the season on page 5

Pine Marten by Tammy Nash

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MARTHA: *Watching*

I'M MARTHA, and I'm a watcher. It's hard for me to chat. I feel like there's soggy newspaper in my mouth. I hate the sound of my voice. My parents say it's normal at my age, and I might outgrow it by Grade 6. Probably all I need is time. But I know it bothers them.

I'm almost 11, and still mostly watching. Maybe Santa will bring me courage this year. Like The Cowardly Lion. The Wizard of Oz is my favourite movie. Wish I could sing like Dorothy. Wish I knew school and people were going to get easier. *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. I love magical stories.

My favourite subjects are Language and Gym. I can memorize practically any word after seeing it once. I've already been a class Spelling Bee winner. I join those. I have zero trouble talking when I just have to spell. But conversations shut me down. I can't think on my feet, especially in class. I'm not scared of our editorial assignments every month. That's simple writing. But I'm already stressed over my turn next spring to *teach something new to the class*. I'm supposed to be aware of my eye contact, body language, and volume. And what the heck should I teach? What kind of mark will I get?

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

Miss Fields seems OK, but she should be doing the talking, and not forcing everybody else. Even listening to other kids can get weird. If somebody talks too long, fast or loudly, I just can't concentrate. Or I don't get it right away. I have to wait a second to understand. I rehearse my words before saying them out loud.

When I heard somebody calling my new teacher *Miss T. Fields*, I thought they were using her first name. That she was actually Misty Fields. So I imagined we'd be allowed to call her that. Oscar literally roared the one time I did that. I hate him. I know he bugs everybody, but I was so embarrassed. Now he even teases the teacher. I'll never forgive him. And I haven't said much in class ever since.

I've invented my own shortcuts and study tricks. My tests, report cards, and parent-teacher interviews are usually good. I talk great at home. Why do I get so nervous at school? I'm much better at thinking and waiting. A couple of kids still come to my birthday parties. But I hardly talk there either. My mother does all that.

Today, Miss T. Fields whispered to me that her real first name is *Theresa*. She was rinsing out her mug in the classroom sink, and I was nearby sharpening my coloured pencils. I was shocked when she spoke to me. I felt sweat on my forehead.

'Misty Fields' would be a fabulous name in a magical story.

She was smiling.

What a wonderful imagination you have! I never once thought of it! It's kind of spooky. Thanks for the giggle, Martha!

I'm pretty sure I was blushing.

CountyLife

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Godfather's Pizza *

Foodland *

Home Hardware *

Minden Valumart *

Rexall *

Shoppers Drug Mart Haliburton *

Todd's Independent *

All inserts are to selected distribution areas.

For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

Exciting discoveries

I WENT to a meeting and in part of the informal conversation a person talked about how King Charles is now on some of our Canadian coins. I was quick to say that I had no idea that this had begun and had certainly not seen any. The person speaking said that she was just looking in her coin purse and discovered one.

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

I was fascinated; how can it be that I have not seen one yet. When I went home, I told my husband about it and then I went to the ceramic potato where we keep loose change. It did not take me long to find a coin with King Charles on it. I had at least one and never noticed.

While I don't think I would go all the way to envy, I did have a reaction to being told that something existed and then sure that I had not had one. Just made me think of all the times that we perceive that others have something extra or less challenges or more opportunities.

We might feel jealous or cheated about something we perceive as shiny and different in someone else's change purse. I think, if we look again or differently at what we have, much of the time we can find the very thing that we think is lacking in our own space. It is said that we focus on the attributes in others that we most want to work on in ourselves. If you see something that delights or that you wish you had, you probably already do, you simply must look inside your own potato or hiding place.

Beware of bears

EARLIER THIS month, the 2026 Hunting Regulations were released and there was a hue and cry from some bear hunters. That was because, according to the regulations, the spring bear season opening day in some of our western Wildlife Management Units had been delayed by 20 days. Typically, major changes like this are not done before public consultation, so it took many people by surprise and caused quite a stir.

It turned out that this was a typo – and a major one at that. To their credit, the Ministry of Natural Resources corrected it quickly on-line and through social media platforms. Now, everyone seems happy again.

A lot of people would let it end there. But a person who writes outdoors humour columns is not one of them.

Look, I'm not one of those people who normally promotes conspiracy theories but hear me out. Any time something like this happens, you have to ask yourself who benefits? In this case, I think we can all agree it is clearly the bears.

OK, so let's follow that down the rabbit hole.

What if our Ministry of Natural Resources has unwittingly hired a bear?

Suddenly, it all makes sense right?

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

I know what you are thinking. That's not possible. They would know, almost immediately, that the applicant for the job was a bear.

True – unless the bear applied for the job in an on-line interview and used AI to appear less bear-like.

What about when the newly hired employee went into the office, you say? How does he or she hide their bearhood then?

Three things: Hoody, loose fitting track pants, and sunglasses.

Suddenly it does not seem so far-fetched, right?

That employee is just the quiet, lumbering guy who shows up every day wearing a hoody, sunglasses, and track pants – just like every other IT guy.

So how are MNR employees ever going to know if they have a bear working in their midst?

Here are some signs they should be looking for.

Is the honey jar in the office kitchen suddenly getting emptied out more frequently? Does one of your employees drink an inordinate amount of A & W root beer? Does one person in the office always take a long walk out to the woods when they excuse themselves to go to the washroom? When the breaktime conversation turns to home renovations does one person in the office speak only of improving their den? Does one person in the office always enthusiastically volunteer to fill up the bird feeder or organize the office picnic?

If you have said yes to any one of these questions, you might have a bear working in your office.

Who's crazy now?

So, what's to be done? I mean, if you are going to fire the bear you need to have just cause. Sure, a violent mauling or even a bluff charge that made someone feel unsafe, could provide that. So too might a ransacking of the kitchen if you could get it on camera. But a typo? No sir.

If the bear is smart – oh, and this one surely is – he or she is now going to keep their head down and do a good job until they've accumulated enough seniority to make it very difficult to let them go without a great severance package.

Mark my words, that's when we'll see the next typo.

Unless, of course, they've hired a moose too.

Community Events

Seedy Saturday - March 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Centre Upper Level, 55 Markside St.
A seed exchange, demonstrations, vendor booths, advice clinic and kid's activities. See website for info.

Nocturnal Insects: Fireflies and Moths - Apr. 7, 1 p.m.
Where: Community Centre, 55 Parkside St. Minden
Join the Minden & District Horticultural Society to learn about "Nocturnal Insects: Fireflies and Moths" guest speaker Kathleen Patnode followed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome!

OUR HEROIN FINDS CONSTABLE ROSS OF THE RCMP ALIVE AT CAI (CANADIAN ARCTIC INTELLIGENCE) HEADQUARTERS. BUT WHERE HAS DR. A. POCOLYPSE FLED?
DO NOT FEAR CONSTABLE. I WILL FREE YOU...
...FOR I AM AURELIA, PROTECTOR OF THE ARCTIC AND THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF ALL WHO LIVE HERE.
BUT WHAT'S THIS? NO..ONLY ONE DEVICE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO BURN CLEAN THROUGH 3 FT OF STAINLESS STEEL...
...DR. A. POCOLYPSE'S ATOMIX GUN!
TEDDY!!

HALIWOOD NORTH

BY: Tamara Holman

AUTHOR'S NOTE: THE CHARACTER "AURELIA" IS A TRIBUTE TO "NELVANA OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS." RECOGNIZED AS CANADA'S FIRST SUPERHERO, PREDATING EVEN WONDERWOMAN, NELVANA MADE HER COMIC DEBUT IN AUGUST 1941. FROM 1940 UNTIL THE END OF WWII, THE WAR EXCHANGE CONSERVATION ACT EFFECTIVELY BANNED THE IMPORT OF VARIOUS NON-ESSENTIAL GOODS INTO CANADA INCLUDING AMERICAN COMIC BOOKS. IN RESPONSE TO THIS A HANDFUL OF CANADIAN ARTISTS, INCLUDING NELVANA CREATOR ADRIAN DINGLE, CREATED "TRIUMPH ADVENTURE COMICS," INSPIRING READERS BOTH LOOKING TO ESCAPE AND FIND HOPE IN THE FIGHT OVERSEAS. FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CHECK OUT THE PODCAST CANADIAN HISTORY EHX. SPECIAL THANKS TO HOPE NICHOLSON (BEDSIDE PRESS) AND RACHEL RICHEY FOR THEIR EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON NELVANA'S ORIGINS.

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The stories of Scotty

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

When news hit that Scotty Morrison had passed away at the age of 95 at the end of February, I knew I needed to write a story.

As a Haliburton local, Morrison's name was one I'd been hearing my entire life. Through his efforts in the volunteer world, his contributions to the sport of hockey, his impact on the many organizations he was associated with over the years.

But the hardest part, with a story like this, is where to begin.

When one life touches so many, how do you hone in on one area of focus? I put out my feelers. Connected with the many who had crossed paths with him over his lifetime. Through that, they connected me with many more. Soon, the story had snowballed. The snippets I had of his life began to come into focus, the black and white words I read on a screen had colour added to them; signs of a life well lived.

Before long, community members were reaching out to me. Asking where the story was. He did so much. He deserves recognition. Make sure he gets it.

And no one was wrong. But I began to feel like one story wasn't enough.

For all the contributions he made, for the legacy he created.

So, it took time. Time to whittle down the many words used to describe Scotty Morrison. Kind. Patient. Compassionate. Gentle. Devoted.

Scotty Morrison, shared by the Hockey Hall of Fame. /submitted

Time to sift through photos that captured so many moments of joy.

Time to sit with the people who knew him, the ones who called him a friend.

And I still feel that I am only scraping the surface.

The life of Scotty Morrison started in Montreal, Quebec, in the year 1930. As a kid, he instantly fell in love with the sport of hockey. While playing in junior leagues, Morrison started refereeing, and quickly took to the role. He moved to Vancouver to work in the Western Hockey League, before being hired by the National Hockey League (NHL) at the age of 24, making him the youngest ref in league history at that time.

By 1964 he had returned to Ontario, and was referee-in-chief for the NHL, before becoming the vice-president of officiating in 1981. In 1986, he was promoted as vice-president of project development, taking the lead for the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. He was instrumental in moving the site to its current location, and expanding the offerings at the venue to become the destination it is today.

Morrison is one of ten recipients of the Wayne Gretzky International Award, highlighting his significant contribution to hockey, and was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1999. He spent over 20 years as a Stanley Cup trustee, before retiring from the role in 2023.

And that's just scraping the surface.

Because there was so much more to Scotty Morrison than his professional career. A husband, a father, a friend. "He was a genuine gentleman," said Carol Moffatt, who grew up alongside Morrison and his family. "He was a very quiet, steady presence. He had nothing to prove, and everything to offer."

Hailing from Etobicoke area, Scotty and his wife, Joan, had eight children. In 1982, Morrison's son, Perry, was one of 84 workers who died on the Ocean Ranger, an oil drilling rig off the coast of Newfoundland; an accident which left no survivors.

Moffatt shared that her brother passed away when he was a teen in a motorcycle accident.

And the shared experience of losing a child was a tether that held the families close. "It was always an unspoken thread between my dad and Scotty," said Moffatt, "something they had both experienced."

Morrison and his family had a cottage up in the Haliburton Highlands for many years, settling in the Kennisis Lake area. He quickly made the area home, diving headfirst into any volunteer opportunities that presented a chance to give back.

"Scotty was very active in supporting our community," said Dysart Mayor Murray Fearrey. "He was a long time property owner at Kennisis Lake, and was extremely supportive of our community. I valued him as a friend, and certainly he will be missed but not forgotten."

Many would remember the Scotty Morrison Hockey Tournament, which ran for seven years and raised over $200,000 net in its history. The fundraiser was designed for Community Care Haliburton County, which became part of Haliburton Highlands Health Services in 2014.

This was how Roxanne Casey came to know Morrison. "He was just such a nice man," said the manager of Canoe FM, who worked alongside Morrison during her days with Community Care. "A total gentleman, a lovely, soft-spoken man."

Casey noted that Morrison felt that the tournament was a good way to give back to the community. Sitting on the organization committee as an honourary chair, Morrison facilitated the ins and outs of the fundraiser until 2016. "He never spoke unless he had something really important to say," said Casey. "But when he did, we listened. We always listened to what he had to say, because you just knew it was important."

While the hockey tournament came to a close in 2016, Morrison continued to support the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation. He was often seen alongside NHL player and local legend Matt Duchene, who headlines the Matt Duchene Charity Golf Classic. "Anytime I was around him, he was such a light," said Duchene during a recent interview. "Just an extremely nice, genuine man who was always smiling and had something supportive to say. He was a tremendous person."

Scotty Morrison passed away at the age of 95, on Feb. 25, 2026 in Invermere, British Columbia. Tributes to the hockey great poured in from the NHL, the Hockey Hall of Fame, the *Globe and Mail*, and *SportsNet*, to name a few.

But, it was only scraping the surface of who he really was. Because Morrison lived many lives. A hockey player, a referee, a consultant, a leader. He was a father, a devoted husband, a friend to many. A volunteer, a doer, a dreamer, and a go-getter.

How do you capture that in one story?

The short answer: you don't. But you follow the breadcrumbs. You trace the tracks. Every person who has a story knows five other people who may know more, and the story continues to build. And to me, that's the real story. Not the words on paper, the links to news articles, the social media posts.

It's the weaving and winding stories from the heart, where Scotty Morrison connected a community through care, through consideration, through compassion.

And that way, his stories will always be told.

Writing on the Senior Side

Think spring, do spring

GAIL STELTER

County Life Contributor

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud (first verse)
By William Wordsworth
I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o›er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Spring Flowers - Tulips (first verse)
By Mary Havran
Tulips, shyly smiling, greet the spring Tightly closed when at First we meet Tulips slowly opening, begin to sing Gaining volume Ever sweet

Love and Maple Syrup (first verse)
By Gordon Lightfoot
Love and maple syrup go together
Like the sticky winds of winter
When they meet
When lonely lovers come to rest
Beneath the trees they do their best
But still they can›t be free

April Showers (first verse)
By Al Jolson
Life is not a highway strewn with flowers
Still it holds a goodly share of bliss
When the sun gives way to April showers
Here is the point you should never miss
Though April showers may come your way
They bring the flowers that bloom in May
So if it›s raining have no regrets
Because it isn›t raining rain you know, it›s raining violets
And where you see clouds upon the hills
You soon will see crowds of daffodils
So keep on looking for a blue bird
And list›ning for his song
Whenever April showers come along

Two poems and two songs that take me willingly into thoughts of spring. I hope they fill you with delightful images and make you smile. I wait for my daffodils and tulips to pop up through the soil and the leftover snow. I wait for April showers bringing buds on my trees. I wait for the host of flowers that will, indeed, bloom in May.

Thinking spring fills my mind and heart with anticipation as I put away winter and move into the season of new growth and endless, gentle outdoor pursuits. And when the time is ripe, I will move from thinking spring to doing spring.

What does my doing spring look like? What does your doing spring look like? From that first morning coffee outside on the deck to putting the boat in the lake to walking beside the river and along the lake, and heading to the garden centre for marigolds and daisies, my doing spring is joyful.

Doing spring gives me pause to consider outings, day trips, and even a spring staycation. We're going to Ottawa. Nothing very new in that. I do love our Nation's Capital, and it is nice to go back even now and then. Each visit includes a new addition to the itinerary. Last time, probably 10 years or so ago, it was the Group of Seven paintings at the National Art Gallery. I love my Tom Thomson print, but it can't compare with his original painting. There were years of tours of the Parliament Buildings, the Museum of Civilization, the War Museum and more.

We have never been to Ottawa in the spring. We have never seen the one million tulips in bloom. We think it's time we did, both for the beauty and to remember and appreciate the history. Here is a summary taken from ottawatourism.ca.

Since 1953, Canada's capital has been hosting the Canadian Tulip Festival, which is now the largest of its kind in the world. This popular annual event attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the globe who long to see over a million tulips blanketing the Ottawa region. Ottawa's connection to tulips dates back to World War II. Following the Nazi Invasion of the Netherlands, Princess Juliana of the Netherlands took refuge in Ottawa along with her two young daughters, Princess Beatrix and Princess Irene. While in exile in Canada, Princess Juliana gave birth to her third daughter, Princess Margriet. At the time of the baby's birth, part of the Ottawa Civic Hospital was declared Dutch soil, to allow the new princess to hold Dutch nationality exclusively. Ottawa also helped to celebrate the princess' birth by flying the Dutch flag at the top of the iconic Peace Tower and playing Dutch music on the tower's carillon. Ottawa was home to these Dutch royal family members until they could finally return to a liberated Netherlands in 1945. Canadian troops played a pivotal role in the liberation as well. Upon returning to the Netherlands, Princess Juliana sought to thank Ottawa and the Canadian people with several gifts, including 100,000 tulip bulbs. Since then, the Dutch royal family has sent tulip bulbs to Canada's capital each year – a lasting gift known as the "Tulip Legacy" which inspired the festival.

My dad was in Holland during WWII and, as an officer in the Canadian Army, he was billeted in the home of a Dutch family. When I go to see the tulips, I will think of him and all the Canadian soldiers who were part of the liberation. I will think of those who came home and those who didn't. I will remember in spring.

The Canadian Tulip Festival, May 8 to 18, 2026, features a massive tulip display and family fun activities. The outdoor event takes place at Commissioners Park, where over 300,000 tulips bloom alongside the Rideau Canal›s picturesque Dows Lake. Access to the site and select programming is free!

We are planning our staycation for the first week of May, before the festival, but if my research is correct, the tulips will be in bloom by then, and the crowds might be a little less. I am going to keep a close watch on the weather and check on the status of the blooms before we go. I am excited to do this spring staycation.

Yet another to-do on my spring to-do list is all about maple syrup. We are heading out to Wintergreen. 3325 Gelert Road - Open Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in March and April. It's time now for "sugaring off" and a "taste of spring". If you are interested in adding this to your to-do spring list, there is additional information on their website.

Finally, I am going to do daffodils. Our annual spring trip to the garden centre includes more daisies and more daffodils in my garden, and all the luscious red geraniums for the six planters on our front deck.

Thinking of spring is full of pleasant thoughts; doing spring is a joyful endeavour. Happy spring!

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Send your letters to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

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Maybe

SOCIAL MEDIA channels and life coaches have hyper-fixations on concrete words.

Yes. No. Two ends of the spectrum, black and white.

There was a large movement around the power of yes. When the world focused on how your life would experience a complete 180 if you turned that frown upside down and replaced the negative in your life with three simple letters.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

Yes to adventure, yes to partnerships, yes to new opportunities.

When that trend burned and fizzled away (as so many tend to do), it was quickly replaced with the power of no. Boundaries were set, priorities put in place.

A reminder that you are allowed to say no when you need rest, when you need to set your focus elsewhere, when you need space and time and inner thought.

And truth be told, there will forever be times and places for yes and no.

Opportunities you'd be silly to miss with a no, expectations you'd diminish with a yes.

You should never give up the power and privilege that comes with those two terms.

But what about the power of maybe?

In school, we were taught that maybe was barely a real word. A fragment of lost thought that was merely used as a filler between the dichotomies of yes and no.

Maybe meant we needed to make up our mind.

Maybe showed weakness.

Maybe didn't count.

Maybe didn't set the tone of the world we were painting.

A world fraught with polarizations that spanned countless colours between yes and no.

I've recently found the value in maybe.

Because it's not a sign of weakness, not a misstep.

It's a blip in the radar as we find our footing.

It's an opportunity to take a breath, to push pause.

And where the cuts and curves of yes and no can be sharp and jarring, the comfort of maybe comes like a soft blanket, a warm sweater.

With maybe, we are coated in opportunities and options. We are given the lay of the land, the time to tether, the freedom to fly.

Maybe means we are not shutting one door to peer through another, not moving forward with gusto and grit, not falling backwards with purpose and pomp.

It's quite simply, a space in the middle.

And while society expects us to grab hold of the lifeboats of yes and no, the polar opposites that reside at either end of the spectrum, I am starting to see the beauty of swimming in the middle while we make up our minds.

The colour and chaos that comes with choices, the option to sit in that space. Even just for a little bit.

So while we grapple with concrete choices, just know that there is forever a third option. One that does not come naturally in a world that expects black and white, right and wrong.

But one that offers a blip in the radar as we find our footing.

The endless opportunities of maybe.

Top 10 signs that spring is here

Here we are at that magical time of year when winter is slowly relinquishing its grasp on our County. The confusing part here is that we're never quite sure when spring has arrived. The calendar says one thing. The world we live in says another.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

With that in mind, here are the top 10 sights that spring is here.

1. It will continue snowing for the next six consecutive weeks.
2. Your snowblower finally decides to start working.
3. The snow suit you ordered finally arrives.
4. There are sudden signs that indicate your dog disrespected your lawn.
5. The sap is running – after you got him to poke a stick in a bear den.
6. You discover a new lake. Unfortunately, it's in your yard.
7. Crows announcing it at 5 a.m.
8. The groundhogs did not predict this.
9. Every towel you own has been used to dry your dog.
10. You can't decide if you are ice fishing or open water fishing.

Glass

Branches sealed in a skin of ice, rows of icicles, tiny as tears, dangling on the twigs of trees,
patches of flattened blades of grass littered with shards of glass, puddles freezing into sheets of ice,
sprawling in the middle of the road where I stand, hunching against the Wind whirling
snowflakes through Air,
that's sharp as the shards of ice that crunch beneath my feet, I feel brittle as the stalks of tall grasses,
their spines sheathed in ice, bending or broken, I can't tell which, as I step closer towards the clusters of straw-coloured grass, waiting for the thaw, instead they are assailed by winter's wrath, gripping spring
before it even begins,
my feet slip on a patch of ice, nothing to grab onto, only the spindly spine of a tree, my fingers sliding
along its skin of glass,
how smooth and cool against my flesh, as I wobble and steady myself, the branches of the
young tree glistening
like diamond lioght as Sun swathes the tree, my eyes squinting at the glints of light, scattered everywhere
on branches and on the ground, where the stalks of tall grasses bend down towards the blades of grass,
the curve of their spines catching morning light, that's sharp and bright but unable to warm Wind
that rampages its way along the road, winter's fury, unrelenting, as I watch Wind hurl snow dust across
the frozen Lake,
smudging the skeletons of trees shivering on the opposite shore, I turn my coat collar up against the cold,
slouching deeper into my layers of warmth as these late days of winter try to strip it away,
loosening my grip on the trunk of the young tree, swathed in ice, quietly wishing it a fruitful spring,
my feet approaching the stalks of tall grasses, brittle as straw, crouching down to see
whether one of them is broken or only bent, feeliing the curve of its glass spine, no break,
relieved to see that it survived the storm and will straighten itself in time, to sway in the Winds of spring
and the zephyrs of summer, alongside the other tall grasses, bent but not broken by the storm,
I rise, my eyes roaming through the branches of trees, sunlight sliding along their skin of ice,
sealing them from Wind and Air, sharp as the shards of glass that litter grass, silvering the tips of their blades,
and encased in a frozen puddle, large as a little Lake, the face of a brown leaf, leftover from last year,
peering up through the glass at the sunlit world, at the naked trees waiting to bud,
I tap at the leaf with the toe of my boot, still here, before it's washed away along with the
debris of last year's leaves
that are leaving as new ones arrive, endings mingling with beginnings, fragile as glass, as I linger by the stalks of tall grasses,
struck by the perfect curve of their spines, surviving another winter, waiting for spring to revive them,
bending but not broken, beneath the blue of a boundless Sky,
spilling light onto the brittle world below.

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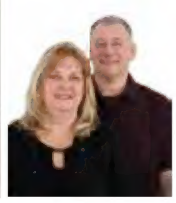

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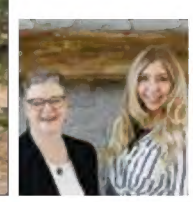

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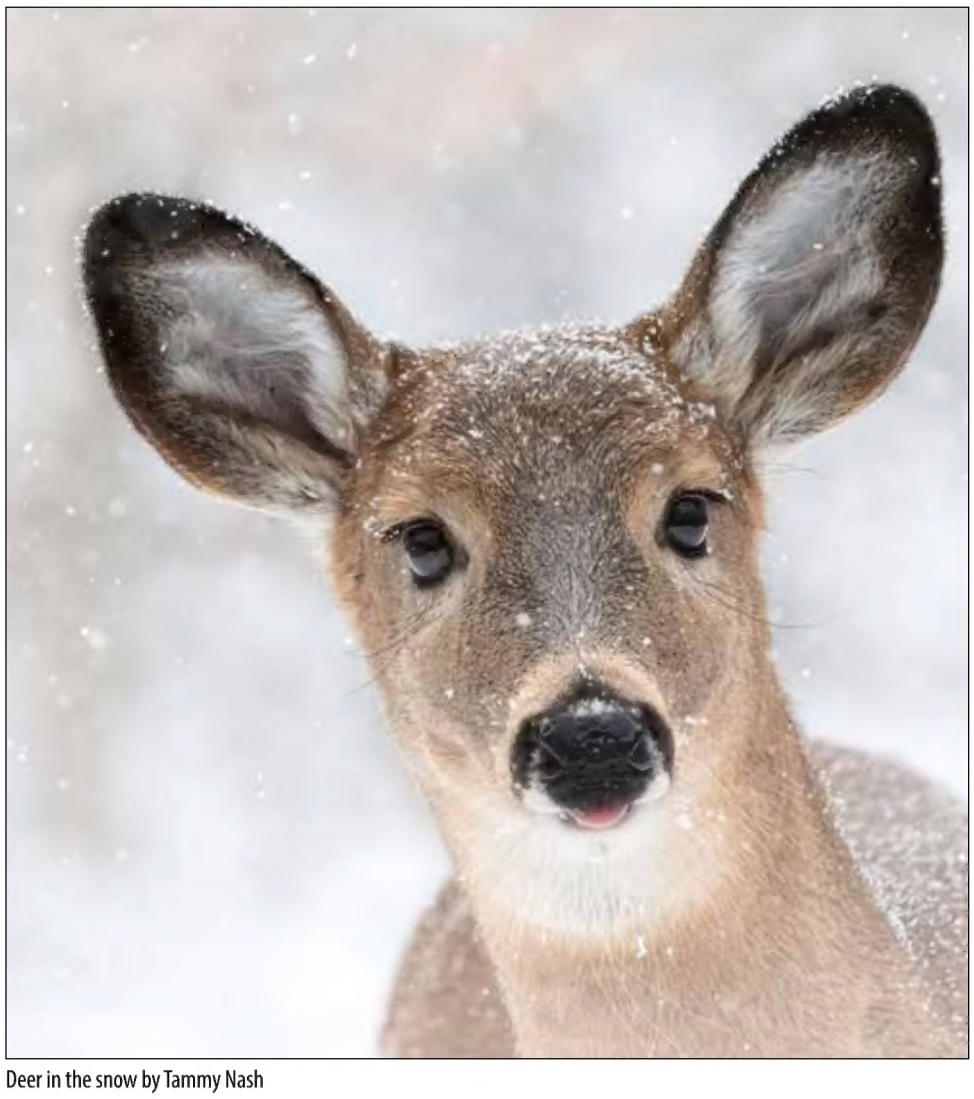
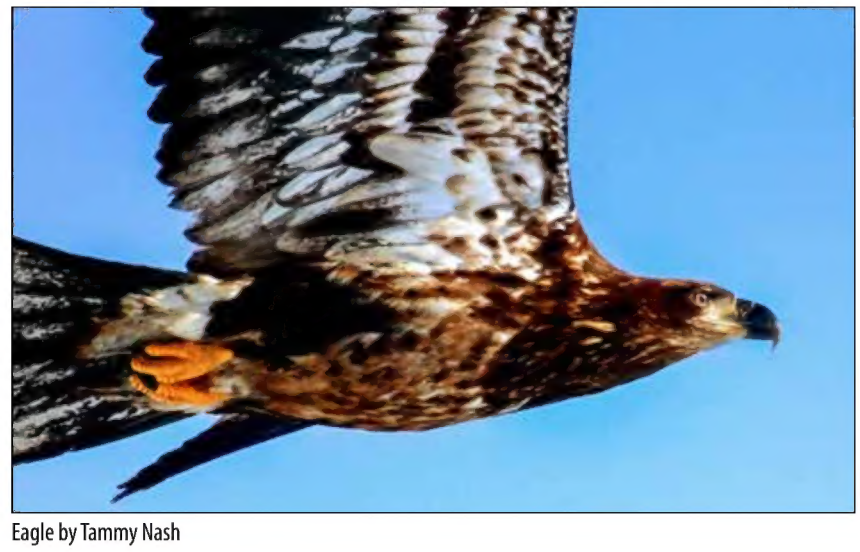
Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.



Deer in the snow by Tammy Nash

Blue Jay by Jill Moulton



Eagle by Tammy Nash

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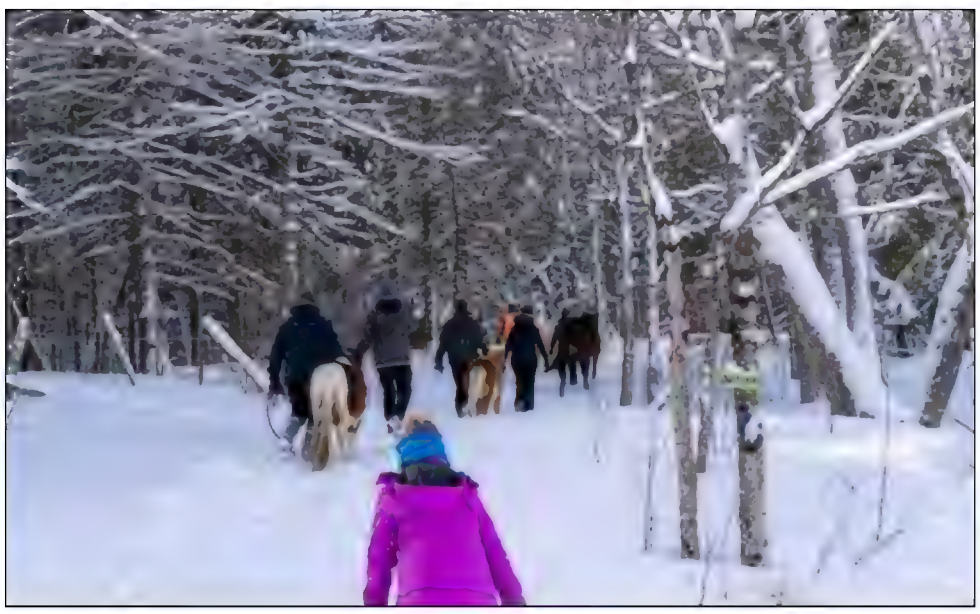
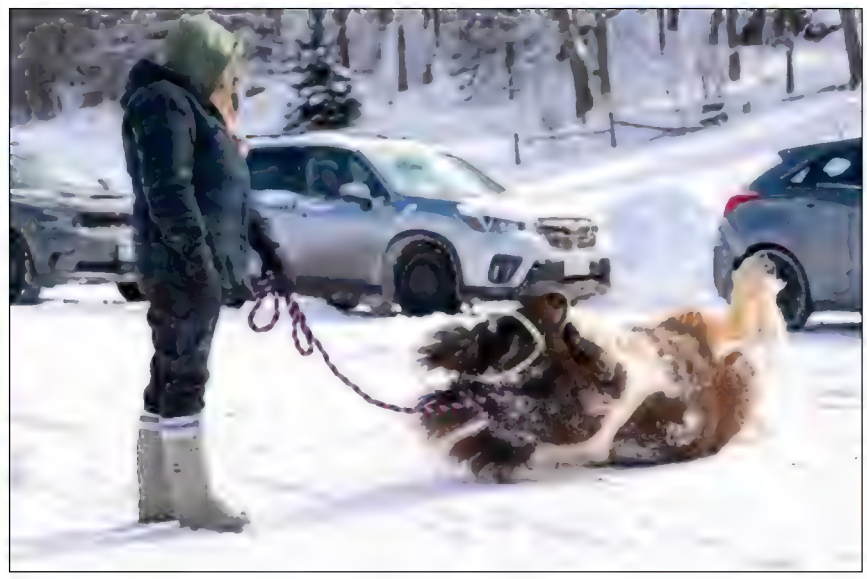
Horsing around

Wintery weather made for nice conditions for the Walkabout Farms Hike with Horses event on March 14, where the community was welcomed to Minden's Walkabout Farms to meet and greet the friendly pack of therapy horses. /TIM YANO staff photographer





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As Hans Walter retires, North Steel enters its 40th year with a transition to new ownership, and I have every confidence that the proud legacy he has built will endure and flourish for years to come.

I, and on behalf of many here who know you, would like to THANK YOU for your guidance, assistance, and relationship over the years. I wish you much success as you move into your new chapter as even though you may be retiring from North Steel, we also understand that 'retirement' is not in your vocabulary.

For those who wish to reach out direct to Hans in joining me in wishing him a good transition,
Hans' new office info is: Dir: 705-457-6913 E: hwalter1127@gmail.com

Wishing you all the best in your next journey in life and business.

Congratulations on your Retirement

Josie Giovenco,
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Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m., Card night 7 p.m.
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5 p.m.
Special events:
2nd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary - 11 a.m.
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
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Email: 441RCL@gmail.com Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend. Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Special Events Only, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 7 p.m.
Sundays: March 29 Cribbage Tournament. Registration is at 10 a.m.
Mondays: March 30 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Tuesdays: March 31 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: March 25 - Darts $5/player 2 p.m. Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m. – No need to pre-register
Thursdays: March 26 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
March 27 Wings and Jam Session $15/lb. 5 to 8 p.m.
Community Care 55+ Lunch $20. 12 p.m.
Saturdays: March 28 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
March 28 Nacho Average Trivia Registration is at 6:30 p.m. Game Begins at 7 p.m. Sharp. $5/Player
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COUNTY
ECHO
The Voice Of The Highlands Since 1882
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1997 Vol. 115, No. 6 • 52 PAGES 90 cents (incl. GST)

Hospital construction should start this summer: Hodgson

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

Victoria-Haliburton MPP Chris Hodgson is confident shovels will be in the ground within four months on the county's new healthcare facilities.

Speaking at a "Townhall Breakfast" hosted by the Chamber of Commerce Saturday, Hodgson told the audience the Ministry of Health and the Haliburton Highlands Health Services board are making progress on the long-awaited expansion projects.

"I expect to see some construction by early summer, if there are no glitches," he told the crowd of about 65 at Stanhope's Community Centre.

That could put the $10.6-million expansion plans at Haliburton Hospital and Hyland Crest in line for a start as early as July.

But Stanhope Reeve Jock Mavor, who is chairman of the board at Hyland Crest, said the health services board could benefit financially by delaying construction on the projects by at least half a year.

Mavor said he has heard the board may be able to qualify for 100 per cent funding to upgrade the facilities, under proposed legislation being considered by the province.

He said the legislation would make it mandatory for all publicly owned long-term care facilities to meet new standards and the province would offer full funding to make any necessary upgrades.

Mavor said it is his understanding that the legislation is expected to be passed in about six months.

Rather than going ahead with construction now with 50 per cent provincial funding, he recommended waiting until the proposed legislation is in place which could give the board full funding from the ministry of Health.

Mavor asked Hodgson to confirm whether the legislation and funding model he cited are indeed being considered by the province.

Hodgson said he isn't aware of either. But if the province does offer increased funding at some point in the future, "of course we'll apply for it," he said.

See HODGSON page 6

DANCE ALONG WITH DEBORAH:

When Deborah Dunleavy sings, children don't just listen – they sing along. The popular performer's energetic concert on Sunday at the Haliburton Legion, left, had children on their feet. Above, Megan McCrae, Andrea Salvatori and Madison Espie get into the spirit, acting out one of the silly nonsense songs that aren't so silly to a child's ear.

Minden MNR and OPP to share the same building

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

It's official – the administrative office for the Minden/Coboconk OPP is moving to the Ministry of Natural Resources building in Minden.

OPP Central Region Chief Superintendent Bill Hutton and Staff Sgt. Andy Millar made the announcement at Wednesday's county council meeting, a day after MPP Chris Hodgson, Solicitor General Bob Runciman and the OPP Commissioner met to make the final decision.

This ends months of speculation and differing reports of where the office will be located.

The Coboconk office will stay open, but Millar and three office positions will move back to Minden. The lease at the present OPP office in Minden will be discontinued.

This means the MNR building, where fewer people have been working since last year's budget cuts, will have to be renovated to include a holding cell. The police expect to use part of

See MNR page 8

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The face of county council will change

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

When it came right down to the final decision, the tradition of having deputy-reeves sit at the county council table met a quick and quiet end.

There was no argument, no debate, just a heavy silence as county councillors prepared to vote on the motion which would change the face of county council.

It's not that there weren't strong views about the motion to eliminate deputy-reeves at county council. But the issue has been debated in some form or another for the past several years, and all the arguments had been exhausted, both for and against. It seemed there was nothing new to say. There was no last-minute attempt to change each other's minds.

Even the people who sat in the audience watching Wednesday's proceedings chose silence when Warden Murray Fearrey asked if anyone from the public would like to put forward their views. Most of the 11 spectators were members of municipal councils who had already expressed their views at meetings over the past month.

Only Fearrey addressed the issues. He said some councils voting against the elimination of deputies felt there were no cost savings to be had. Fearrey said the savings "are insignificant in the scope of things" but they do

See THIRD page 4

The Echo office will be closed on Good Friday, so advertising and editorial deadlines will be Thursday, March 27 at 5 p.m.. The next edition appears Tues., April 1. We wish everyone a happy Easter holiday

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2026 MARKET OUTLOOK

As we settle into the start of 2026, I've been doing a lot of reflecting on the year behind us.the Haliburton market has officially transitioned into a buyer's market, moving away from the frantic pace of previous years toward a more cautious and strategic environment.

2025 Retrospective: A Shifting Landscape

- **Inventory Surge:** Listings spiked as COVID-era owners sold due to rising carrying costs and stricter short-term rental (STR) regulations.
- **Pricing Softening:** While waterfront remains the premier asset, average sale prices have begun to ease.
- **A Slower Pace:** Buyers are taking more time to decide, forcing sellers to recalibrate their price expectations.

2026 Outlook: Trends to Watch

- **Record-High Inventory:** A "double wave" of new 2026 listings and unsold 2025 carryover is expected to create the highest inventory levels in over a decade.
- **Sideline Buyers Return:** Stabilizing Bank of Canada rates are expected to bring cautious buyers back into the market.
- **Strategic Pricing is Vital:** In a high-volume market, accurate pricing is the most critical factor for a successful sale.
- **The Spring Advantage:** Baumgartner Realty Group anticipates a seasonal uptick in demand, advising sellers to list early to capture motivated "first-wave" buyers.

HALIBURTON COUNTY

RESIDENTIAL SALES

2024 **544 SALES** → 2025 **470 SALES**

14%

NEW LISTINGS

2024 **1419 LISTINGS** → 2025 **1516 LISTINGS**

6.8%

AVERAGE SALE PRICE

NON-WATERFRONT

2024 **$426,911** → 2025 **$397,497**

7.4%

WATERFRONT

2024 **$878,633** → 2025 **$811,671**

8.25%

**Data researched from the OnePoint Association of Realtors as of February 9, 2026*

CONTACT LINDA FOR A COMPLIMENTARY EQUITY & PRICING REVIEW
(NO PRESSURE, JUST REAL NUMBERS)

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SCAN TO VIEW LISTINGS